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The Remainder of the ESSAY on Conversation, began in our last.

THEY are too far embarked in a bad Cause to make a Retreat with a good Grace; and therefore if they have added to their natural Parts the Superstructures of Learning, they will entrench themselves within a vast many artful Distinctions and subtle Evasions.

They are very prolix in invalidating those Arguments, which No body lays any Stress upon; but when they are really strong and impregnable, they would fain slip them over as hastily as they can, and take a slight, cursory Notice of them. Very material Objections are to them like marshy Ground: A Man may make a Shift to run lightly and nimbly over it; but if he ever tread leisurely, and dwell long upon one Place, he infallibly sinks.

If ever a *Vein of Ridicule* be necessary, I think it is here, where a *Vein of just Arguing* can have no Effect. When a Man is steeled and hardened against all Conviction, we may, like *Hannibal*, after other Expedients have been tried in vain, cut through the *Rock* with *Vinegar*. Some *Jesuits* once in Company with *Monsieur BOILEAU*, asserted, according to the Principles of that Society, that *Attrition* was only necessary; and that we were not obliged to *love God*. It was to no Purpose to unravel their Fallacies: They shewed themselves inviolably attached to their Error; when *Mr. BOILEAU*, started up, cried, "Oh! how prettily will it sound in the Day of

Judgment, when our LORD shall say to his Elect: *Come you, ye well-beloved of my Father; for you never loved me in your Life, but always forbade that I should be beloved, and constantly opposed those Heretics, who were for obliging Christians to love me; and you, on the contrary, Go to the Devil, and his Angels, you the accursed of my Father; for you have loved me with your whole Heart, and have solicited and urged every Body else to love me.*" This Raillery struck the Opponents dumb; and bore down that Opposition, which the most cogent Arguments before could not quell.

—*Ridiculum acri*

Fortius & melius magnas plerumque secat res.

If a handsome Opportunity presents itself, it may not be amiss to deal with an opinionative Fellow, as *Bishop BRAMHALL* did with the *Popish Missionary*. When his Antagonist would obstinately maintain whatever he had rashly advanced, the Bishop drove the Disputant up in so narrow a Corner, that he was forced to affirm, that *Eating* was *Drinking*, and *Drinking* was *Eating*, in a material or bodily Sense. This Assertion was so big with Palpable Absurdities, that he needed no greater Trophy, if he could get under the *Jesuit's* Hand what he declared with his Tongue; which, being desired, was by the other, in his Heat and Shame to seem to retreat, as readily granted. But upon cooler Thoughts, (says my Author) finding perhaps, after the Contest was over, that he could not quench his Thirst with a Piece of Bread; he reflected so sadly on the Dishonour he had suffered, that, not being able to digest it in ten Days Time he died.